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Reason of State: The Absolute Power of Ivan the Terrible and Stalin

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Introduction

In *From Politics to Reason of State*, Maurizio Viroli identifies Machiavelli as the chief mastermind of the transition from the end of politics as the art of establishing a good community to the aim of politics as the pursuit of power.¹ Once a ruler has secured his power, then he can pursue the good of the people, but his chief aim is in securing and preserving his own power. During Machiavelli's time, there was a distinct difference between the concept of politics and that of reason of state.² Politics was viewed as those actions taken by a government that would establish the good of the community. Reason of state pertained to those actions taken by a ruler that would enhance his own power and preserve his position. Although these are the definitions that Viroli specifically concentrated upon in his book, this definition of politics as the good of society is too Aristotelian a definition of politics as Viroli himself admits.³ This paper uses the modern definition of politics identified by Viroli, "any practice of government, legislation, and jurisdiction."⁴ Politics incorporates all aspects concerning the governing of a people, regardless of the ultimate goal. Tyranny, as well as democracy, is a form of politics because both deal with methods of governing the people. The moral aspect of politics certainly addresses the end goal, but the methods aspect of politics, those means used to govern the people, exists regardless of the aim. The method aspect incorporates both a science and an art form.

There are many explanations for the rationale motivating a leader while he is in power. A Utilitarian leader will be motivated to use his power to ensure that the greatest

¹ Maurizio Viroli *From Politics to Reason of State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 126.

² Viroli 134-136.

³ Viroli 2.

⁴ Viroli 2.

laws, regardless of whether or not he is aware of Machiavelli's "creation" of these laws. For if the laws truly exist in nature, then they govern politics regardless of whether one is aware of their specifics or not. These laws are infinitely complex and vary upon the exact situation and circumstances, but there are still generalities that can be presented. This was Machiavelli's task, to present those generalities that can be modified to cover the specifics of the situation. Machiavelli's *The Prince* was an attempt to awaken rulers to the existence of some of the natural laws that govern politics. Specifically, it illustrated those natural laws that govern the preservation of a ruler's personal power. Because a truly adept ruler may exercise these laws without being aware of Machiavelli's teaching, it was not Machiavelli who actually created these laws; he merely discovered them and brought them to popular attention.

The foundation of this dogma grew directly from Machiavelli's intent in *The Prince* to "go straight to a discussion of how things are in real life and not waste time with a discussion of the imaginary world."⁷ If there are specific laws that govern politics, then only an examination of events in the real world will reveal those laws. Machiavelli further asserted that "anyone who ignores everyday reality in order to live up to an ideal will soon discover he has been taught how to destroy himself."⁸ These natural laws exist whether or not one recognizes them. Adhering to an ideal, if that ideal is contrary to a natural law, will only result in the downfall of a ruler.

Machiavelli advocated that the leader should promote the general welfare of his people, but, being a realist, recognized that unbending loyalty to the general welfare would bring the downfall of the ruler. In developing his doctrine, Machiavelli therefore

⁷ Machiavelli 532.

⁸ Machiavelli 532.

taught concrete examples of the methods a ruler employs to maintain power by doing good when he can, and committing evil if he must. As an illustration, Machiavelli espoused the principle of lying: a ruler should tell the truth when possible, but if necessary to further his own power, he must be prepared to lie, not only to foreign authorities, but to his own population as well.⁹

If politics is both a science and an art, then the ability to triumph over *fortuna*¹⁰ represents the artful side of politics. A leader can possess great skill, but can still be defeated by the whims of *fortuna*.¹¹ There are no strict laws governing *fortuna* that can be taught. In this respect, the ability to take advantage of those opportunities provided by *fortuna*, while at the same time not be overwhelmed by the ill-fate that *fortuna* brings, is the technical knowledge corroborated by Michael Oakeshott in his essay "Rationalism in Politics." According to Oakeshott, this technical knowledge, because it does not deal with concrete methods, cannot be directly learned.¹² Rather, it must be *caught*, rather than taught. For this reason, Machiavelli advocated that a ruler should follow the examples of those masterful rulers who had preceded him. In surrounding himself by historical mentors, a ruler can hope to grasp that which is directly unteachable, the art aspect of politics, the ability to deal with *fortuna*.

"I think it may be true that *fortuna* determines one half of our actions, but that, even so, she leaves us to control the other half, or thereabouts."¹³ A particularly skillful ruler can seize the raging torrent of *fortuna* and guide it to his own advantage. While the

⁹ Machiavelli 537.

¹⁰ *Fortuna* in *The Prince* is a unique concept of Machiavelli and is translated as more than merely fortune or fate, it encompasses everything which affects humankind but is beyond his/her control and is rather capricious in nature.

¹¹ Machiavelli 514.

¹² Michael Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics" in *Rationalism in Politics and other Essays* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Press, 1991), 15.

¹³ Machiavelli 551-552.

ruler can never gain direct control over *fortuna*, he can attempt to guide it, preparing bulwarks to defend against it in some areas, while taking advantage of the opportunities that it provides in others. In doing so, a ruler must change his own actions to suit the opportunities provided by *fortuna*. “[I]f one knew how to change one’s character as times and circumstances change, one’s luck would never change.”¹⁴ A ruler must be able to differentiate between those situations that require the cunning fox and those that require the powerful lion. Ivan never demonstrated an aptitude for guiding *fortuna*, while Stalin was very proficient in taking advantage of *fortuna*.

The basic structure of this paper imitates Machiavelli’s work in *The Prince*. Machiavelli developed his theory and then used historical examples to support his thesis. This paper seeks to apply Machiavelli’s principles as outlined in *The Prince* to a single contemporary period in order to determine which principles are still valid and which ones have changed with the progress of time. The progression of time has caused a shifting of those principles that govern the theory of reason of state. Machiavelli did not have to overly concern himself with the people. Popular uprisings might occur, but they were unorganized and spontaneous in nature, and the army could crush these without much effort. It was not necessary for his prince to gain the complete support of the people during his reign. For Machiavelli, the greatest significance was the army. It could be used to police the local population as well as repel foreign invaders. But the progression of time has brought the elevation of the people at the expense of the army. The army is still important in contemporary times, but the most critical aspect is now the people. As a result of the education of the masses and the accompanying social mobilization, the people are now at a new position, that of being the dominant force with which the leaders

¹⁴ Machiavelli 552.

must contend. But this shift presents difficulties to reason of state because of motivations. People will be much more willing to support a Utilitarian leader because his motivation is to increase their welfare. The motivation of a ruler using reason of state, however, is to increase his own power. Care must be taken to ensure that the people never realize this motivation: that the ruler is attempting to further his own power rather than to practice Aristotelian politics and further the good of the community. A modern ruler then must take great caution in ensuring that his true motivations are never divined. He must lie to his own people in order to maintain his own power.

A presentation of a purely theoretical hypothesis not supported by facts is identified by Machiavelli as being useless because it merely teaches a ruler how to destroy himself.¹⁵ Therefore, the goal of this paper is to prove Machiavelli's concepts through the support of historical evidence, and also through this examination, to show the change that has resulted in Machiavelli's precepts in the modern era. Machiavelli interpreted history in his own manner and through this interpretation described principles that govern the theory of reason of state. An historical examination of Ivan and Stalin will prove the credibility of Machiavelli's principles regarding reason of state. Additionally, it is vital to understand that Machiavelli established moral principles to govern the use of this science. These moral principles are used to restrain the actions called for by the scientific principles, to place boundaries to constrain this power. Both Ivan and Stalin divorced these moral principles from the scientific principles to the detriment of large parts of the population.

¹⁵ N. Machiavelli "The Prince" in *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, 2nd Ed., edited by Michael L. Morgan (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), 532.

Main Actors

Ivan the Terrible and *Oprichnina*

Ivan IV (1530-1584) was one of the most ruthless tyrants in the history of nations. Shaped by his childhood, his ruthless measures were not without purpose. While still a child, Ivan's father Vasili III died. Because Ivan was not old enough to assume power, a regency ruled until he was of age to rule. The constitution of this regency shifted often, with the deaths of regents by suspicious means or by murder perpetrated by other members of the royal family and of the boyar class. Ivan's own mother was probably poisoned, and several uncles and aunts were murdered or banished to convents. Influenced by the boyars' hunger for power, and having seen the consequences for anyone who opposed the boyars, Ivan resolved to take any measure necessary to destroy the power of the boyars. To this end, he created the *Oprichnina* and began his infamous reign of terror.

Many boyars were publicly executed by slow, gruesome means. Impalement was one means of execution favored by the tsar. These executions instilled a fearful loyalty in the other boyars. Not all boyars were executed: Ivan recognized the impossibility of destroying the boyars as a class. Moreover, because he needed them to help rule over his vast state, Ivan banished many boyars to borderlands. This action served two purposes. First, the isolation of the boyars from both the capital and the other boyars made it impossible for them to form a conspiracy against Ivan. Second, the boyars took their military retinue with them, thus strengthening the outposts in these borderlands.¹⁶ With the constant wars that Ivan waged, this strengthening of border posts helped relieve fear of a successful invasion against the Russian state. Although Ivan became overzealous in

¹⁶ Ruslan G. Skrynnikov, *Великий Государь Иоанн Васильевич Грозный*, Vol. 1, 379.

his use of terror, he triumphed in destroying the power of the boyars, thereby concentrating all power in the position of the tsar.

Stalin and NKVD

Joseph Stalin began to amass power and came to the fore during Lenin's illness and eventual death in 1924. In 1922, he banded together with fellow Communist Party members Zinoviev and Kamenev in forming a *troika* that dominated the Politburo and succeeded in discrediting Trotsky.¹⁷ After Trotsky was discredited, Stalin allied with Bukharin to defeat Kamenev and Zinoviev, ousting Kamenev from the politburo in 1925 and Zinoviev in 1926.¹⁸ Stalin then turned against Bukharin and forced his removal from the politburo in 1929.¹⁹ Kirov, the last possible rival to Stalin's power, was assassinated under suspicious circumstances in December 1934. Not satisfied with merely depriving rivals from power, Stalin orchestrated the first Moscow show trials in 1936. The show trials began his direct reign of terror which destroyed Party members, military officers, and civilians until the 1930s terror was stopped by the advent of World War II. During this time, Stalin used the Soviet secret police, the People's Commissariat of Internal affairs (NKVD), to great effect in eliminating rivals for power. He additionally rotated the directors of the NKVD to prevent any single director from achieving too much personal power and becoming a potential rival. In his rise to power, Stalin demonstrated an aptitude for knowing when to work behind the scenes and when to utilize a full force assault on his opponents.

¹⁷ Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 10.

¹⁸ Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 11.

¹⁹ Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, 18.

Ideology

Ideology is one significant aspect that Machiavelli never directly addressed but which can presumably be covered along the same rules that govern dealing with *fortuna*. Ideology is the foundational belief system that determines people's behavior and is the strongest motivator in governing people's actions, particularly those of the ruling elite. The underlying religious ideology of the boyars offers one explanation for their lack of attempts to overthrow Ivan: they too believed that he was divinely appointed. Attacking him might bring danger to their souls. Ideology is one reason that many Party members confessed during the show trials. The members were convinced that it was better for the system itself if they confessed. Their personal sacrifices were made so that the corporate system could advance. These members were willing to sacrifice their lives in support of their ideology. Ideology is the strongest force influencing the behavior of people. At the same time, individual ideologies often differ depending upon the value system of the particular individual. As will be examined, some Communist Party members had to be tortured to confess, while others had to have the lives of their children threatened before they would sign confessions and publicly denounce their own treason. The latter category of Party members did not hold the same ideology as Bukharin and others who placed the Party above all other considerations. Ideology is a difficult proposition for a ruler because it is not always uniform across the population. Additionally, although the ruler can affect ideology, he can only adjust it to a limited degree. The greater the leader's skill—his ability to recognize prevalent ideologies and craft them to a desired goal—the more he can guide ideology, but it is never something that he can directly control. The ruler can create his own ideology, such as Stalin's cult of personality, but he

has no certainty that his ideology will triumph over inherent personal ideologies when conflict between the two occurs. Whichever ideology the person holds as a true foundational belief system will motivate his actions, particularly during times of crisis.

Most of the time it is easier for the ruler to recognize ideology and to modify his policies than it is for him to contend with the whims of *fortuna*. Just as he gains extensive benefits from capitalizing upon *fortuna*, the ruler also derives great advantages from utilizing the opportunities that ideology furnishes. Like *fortuna*, ideology requires consummate skill to guide and to exploit those opportunities that it provides. Ideology should be treated like *fortuna*: bulwarks should be established to direct it. A ruler should seize those occasions that ideology presents, but the ruler must always be wary of it, recognizing that ideology is never completely under his control.

The Role of Populations

Machiavelli's Theory

The advent of social mobility in the modern age has caused a significant shift in the power structure of Machiavelli's construction. The military is no longer dominant. Instead, the people have risen to a position of peak importance. Increased education, workers' unions, grass roots organizations, non-government organizations, all these teach people political responsibility. No longer is the ruling aristocracy in power simply because of birth. In modern societies, people are able to achieve social mobility, to attain political power, and to exercise that power because of the new opportunities provided by both increased education and organizational capability. As a result of their ability to achieve and to use power, people are now the most important aspect of reason of state.

In dealing with the population, above all else, a ruler must avoid being hated by his people.²⁰ There are many actions that lead to popular hatred. Most of these actions are related to culture and circumstances, but there are still a few generalizations that can be covered. There are also varying degrees of hatred ranging from contempt to total hatred. Although a ruler would like to avoid any degree of hatred, it is imperative that he avoid total hatred. Revolutions occur when a ruler is totally hated by the population. When a ruler is merely held in contempt, people are likely to disobey, but it is unlikely that they will resort to a full-scale revolution.

Machiavelli identified fear as being quite distinct from hatred. In fact, these emotions are not even related. It is possible, and even beneficial, to be feared while at the same time not to be hated. Fear can be quite beneficial to the regime. If fear is stronger than popular hatred for the regime, then the people will be too terrified of the consequences to organize and to participate in a revolution.

Hatred will often arise when a ruler is forced to do that which is wrong. In these circumstances, it is vital that the ruler establish the legitimacy of his actions: "Whenever you have to kill someone, make sure you have a suitable excuse and an obvious reason."²¹ Or in regard to lying, a ruler is never short "of legitimate reasons to justify breaking his word."²² However, a ruler who craftily uses lies will not even have to present legitimate reasons for the prevarication. The population never even knows of the falsehood, and thus does not require a justification. Concerning actions, a ruler should try to "delegate responsibility for unpopular actions while taking personal responsibility

²⁰ Machiavelli 538.

²¹ Machiavelli 535.

²² Machiavelli 537.

for those that will win favor.”²³ These strategies tie into a ruler’s mission to avoid popular hatred. If a ruler is able to convince the populace that an action is necessary, then the action is no longer unpopular and the ruler can take direct responsibility for it.

An examination of the delegation of responsibility reveals that it is not the delegation itself that is important, but the appearance that the ruler is not involved with the matter that is significant. Thus, a leader can actually perpetrate an action, later assign culpability for it to another, and succeed in avoiding hatred. In dealing with people, it is perception, and not reality, that is important. Of course, the closer the ruler can make a perception into reality, the better the effect. Concerning reason of state, it is the short-term perception that is important; but, concerning morality, it is the long-term perception.

Machiavelli used an illustration of a lion and a fox to describe the masterful conduct of a ruler. The fox represents craftiness, while the lion symbolizes pure strength.²⁴ The role of the fox though, works only when it is unseen.

But it is essential to know how to conceal how crafty one is, to know how to be a clever counterfeit and hypocrite. You will find people are so simple-minded and so preoccupied with their immediate concerns, that if you set out to deceive them, you will always find plenty of them who will let themselves be deceived.²⁵

The craftiness of the fox works at those times when discretion is vital, when a frontal attack on a rival will fail. The fox is used to make the preparations for the show of force. Then, when the shrewd preparations are coming to fruition, it is time for the lion to show his strength in a powerful, direct assault. Just as the hounds rarely catch sight of the fox during the chase, so the people should never realize the preliminary measures taken.

²³ Machiavelli 540.

²⁴ Machiavelli 536-537.

²⁵ N. Machiavelli “The Prince” 537.

Ivan's Actions

Ivan's actions were midline in dealing with the people. While it is true that he avoided the hatred of the people, there was never a coherent strategy designed to foster the legitimacy of the regime. Ivan did not follow Machiavelli's dictum to delegate responsibility for unpopular actions or to truly establish legitimacy for his actions. On 8 January 1570, the tsar presided over a court that was arraigned during the sacking of Novgorod.²⁶ Prisoners from the city were brought before this court to be interrogated and tried for treason. As part of the interrogations, the accused were brutally tortured to a point where they would confess to anything.²⁷ The torturing and killing was carried out in a public square, without any attempt at secrecy. Any legitimacy gained by the confessions of the accused was totally negated by the means used to achieve them. Additionally, any legitimacy established by the tsar's presiding over the court was destroyed by the torturing of the accused, as well as by the arrest and execution of random townspeople totally unassociated with the accusation of treason leveled against the city leaders. Far short of delegating responsibility for the destruction of Novgorod, the tsar wanted everyone to know that he was responsible. Rather than delegating responsibility for a distasteful action, he attempted to assign blame. In a speech before the remaining leading citizens of Novgorod on 13 February, Ivan asked that God would pass judgment upon the prelate Pimen and his accomplices.²⁸ He further declared that the blood that had been spilled "lies upon those traitors."²⁹ Assigning blame afterward requires more precautions to succeed than delegating distasteful tasks beforehand. The

²⁶ Ruslan G. Skrynnikov. *Трагедия Новгорода* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Imeni "Sabashnikovyykh," 1994), 84.

²⁷ Boris Florya. *Иван Грозный* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1999), 239.

²⁸ Ruslan G. Skrynnikov. *Трагедия Новгорода*, 95..

²⁹ Ruslan G. Skrynnikov. *Трагедия Новгорода*, 95.

public manner of the tortures, as well as the randomness of the killing, prevented the effective transfer of blame to Pimen. If there had been a careful selection of those arrested, as well as secret tortures followed by public trials, assigning blame to Pimen would probably have been successful.

The primary reason that the people never developed a hatred for the tsar was the belief instilled in them by both the tsar and the Orthodox Church that the tsar was divinely appointed. The people therefore attributed the atrocities committed by Ivan to punishment for their own wicked actions; at other times, they simply wondered why a capricious God was playing cruel tricks on them. Maureen Perrie in *The Image of Ivan the Terrible in Russian Folklore* examined the view that the population held regarding the tsar based upon his depiction in Russian folklore. Of course, care must be taken when using folklore to draw conclusions because it is a collective, oral history that subtly changes over time rather than a more concrete individual memoir. However, an examination of Ivan's image in Russian folklore still produces some important conclusions. The most important contribution regards the translation of *Ivan Groznyi* into English as Ivan the Terrible. Many Russian scholars interpret the epithet *groznyi* from the peasant viewpoint as Ivan the Fearsome, or Ivan the Majestic.³⁰ Particular attention is paid to Ivan the Fearsome, with the argument that folk tales recognize Ivan as a cruel ruler, but this cruelty was that of a strong ruler who was feared by his enemies.³¹ But the folk tales involve more complexity in the tsar's image. Other folk tales record the tsar as accustomed to indulging his every desire, leading to the belief that God had

³⁰ Maureen Perrie, *The Image of Ivan the Terrible in Russian Folklore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 12, 18-19.

³¹ Perrie 14.

placed an unrestrained ruler over them for reasons that were known only to Him.³² The folk song regarding the peasant Domna's beauty was one example of the tsar's lack of restraint. The tsar fell in love with Domna when he first saw her, but she refused to acknowledge his profession of love.³³ In a fit of rage at being denied, the tsar ordered that she be beheaded.³⁴ This immediate fulfillment of this order demonstrated the unrestrained power of the tsar to do as he wished, regardless of the innocence of the victim. The tsar was regarded as a strong ruler who was feared by his enemies, but loyal subjects also feared him because of his unrestrained power.

Ivan made sporadic attempts to establish legitimacy for his actions. In a public speech on 27 February 1549, he denounced the exploits of the boyars:

[You] wished to be all-powerful; in my name they stole honors and rank, enriched themselves through injustices, oppressed the people—and no one forbade them... You, the boyars, you did what you wished, wicked rebels, unjust judges! What answers will you give us now? How many tears, how much blood, you have made to flow! I am clean of this blood!³⁵

Because his actions were never confined simply to the boyars but included large numbers of innocent people as well, these erratic attempts to establish legitimacy achieved limited success. Partial legitimacy was established for his reign as a whole, due to his reliance upon divine appointment, but not for many of the individual operations themselves. The people were often bewildered by his behavior but surprisingly never actually hated the tsar.

In another case, Ivan had Metropolitan Philip seized while the Metropolitan was in the midst of a special service to honor Saint Mikhail the Archangel in the Uspensky

³² Perrie 57.

³³ Perrie 56.

³⁴ Perrie 56.

³⁵ Ian Grey 181.

Cathedral. Led by the *Oprichnik* Basmanov, several *oprichniki* entered the Cathedral, read a sentence by an ecclesiastical court stripping Philip of his title, and proceeded to carry out the sentence in the middle of the crowded Cathedral.³⁶ The Metropolitan was banished first to the Nikolaevsky monastery, and later to a monastery near Tver, where Maliuta Skuratov, one of the tsar's trusted men, murdered him.³⁷ The legitimacy established by a court proceeding was destroyed by the manner in which the order was discharged. To this end, Ivan accomplished Machiavelli's population aspect of reason of state: he avoided the hatred of the people. However, the people never actually supported his actions. The people never excused the means, and this cost him a potential source of power. But because of a lack of mobilization of the people, the population was not as significant a source of power as it would later become. Ivan's rule demonstrated the lack of significant power of the people. Ivan demonstrated the condition at that time, the people were not the essential power base.

Overall, Ivan appears not to have genuinely cared about whether or not the people judged his actions to be legitimate. The belief that he was divinely appointed was not an act designed to confuse the people: Ivan genuinely believed it. Because of this presupposition, anyone who opposed him was opposing God Himself. To this end, his primary concern was to prove to everyone, people and the boyars alike, that he could rule as he wished. Whenever this desire to prove his authority conflicted with actions taken to establish legitimacy, the obsession to exercise absolute power was always his consummate goal. Because the people had not gained the tremendous power that they

³⁶ A. A. Zimin, *Опричнина* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Territoria," 2001), 164.

³⁷ A. A. Zimin, *Опричнина*, 164.

possess in contemporary times, Ivan was successful in his haphazard treatment of the Russian population.

Stalin's Actions

Stalin had participated in a revolution that had been built upon a foundation of popular revolt. With this event in recent history, Stalin was forced to establish legitimacy for his regime or risk another revolt of the population. During his initial consolidation of power, Stalin was in the process of destroying the church, an action which precluded a reliance upon the concept of "divine right" that Ivan had utilized. Instead, he had to establish the legitimacy of his rule. The people were the direct target of his attempts. It was necessary that they believe in the legitimacy of the regime. If they did not, then it was quite possible that another popular revolution would occur and dethrone Stalin's regime. An illegitimate regime would arouse the hatred of the people. However, a regime perceived by the people as legitimate, regardless of whether it actually was, would avoid this hatred.

Show trials were designed to convince the people of the legitimacy of both the regime and Stalin as the leader of that regime. Stalin's first step was to ensure that the public viewed the courts as being capable of issuing innocent verdicts, as well as guilty verdicts. Several months prior to the show trial of Kamenev and Zinoviev, Konstantin Semenchuck and Stepan Startsev were charged with the murder of Doctor Nikolai Vulfson. The state-controlled press had made certain that the crime attracted considerable publicity.³⁸ Prosecutor-General Andrei Vyshinsky personally represented the prosecution at the trial and was adamant as to the guilt of the accused. However, the

³⁸ Arkady Vaksberg, trans by Jan Butler, *Stalin's Prosecutor: The Life of Andrei Vyshinsky* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), 75-76.

evidence was very circumstantial, and the Supreme Court of the RSFSR halted the trial.³⁹

Although justice probably prevailed in this trial, there appears to be a more sinister explanation for the dismissal of the trial. In addition to the unusually extensive coverage by the press, Vyshinsky, the Procurator-General himself, represented the state, instead of a lower official from the Procurator's office as was customary for such a trial.⁴⁰

Vyshinsky was an excellent orator who used these skills to draw increased public attention to the case. Despite Vyshinsky's skill, the Supreme Court halted the trial for insufficient evidence, showing that justice could be administered in Russia. It appears that the primary purpose of the trial was to demonstrate an authentic success of the judicial system just prior to the supreme injustice of the staged Moscow Trial. By showing that the Judicial System was prepared to dismiss a trial when the evidence was only circumstantial, the validity of the court system could be strengthened in the eyes of the public. The murder of Doctor Vulfson had caused quite a sensation throughout the nation and had been followed closely by the public; therefore, the dismissal of the trial was widely publicized, resulting in stronger public confidence in the legitimacy of the courts.⁴¹ An illegitimate trial of Kamenev and Zinoviev might have fostered a spirit of hatred within the people toward the regime for the prosecution of innocents. Later, when people realized the full illegitimacy of the regime and of the courts, the police state had already been entrenched to the point that people were unable to resist. Too late, they realized that the regime was not legitimate. With the intensive police state, fear of arrest was stronger than their hatred for the regime, and this fear prevented them from exercising their hatred in a revolution.

³⁹ Vaksberg 75-76.

⁴⁰ Vaksberg 75-76.

⁴¹ Vaksberg 76.

One important aspect during the later show trials was the confession of the accused to every charge that the state brought. The accused publicly admitted that the Party was correct, and, more importantly, that the leader of the Party, Stalin, was right. The fact that the confessions had been gained through torture bore little relevance upon the matter. The NKVD was very careful to keep the tortures from becoming public knowledge, making the confessions look more legitimate than they actually were. Other methods were used besides torture to extract confessions from the accused. A new law made children ages 12 years and older punishable as adults, making it legal to inflict capital punishment upon them.⁴² By confessing, many Party leaders were protecting the lives of their children. All of these contrivances served, if not to establish direct legitimacy, then to confuse the population and to keep the truth behind the crimes being perpetrated by the state from being fully realized for what they were, the attempts of one man to attain absolute power. The hatred of the people was avoided when popular members of the ruling elite were attacked because the people never realized that the motivation behind those attacks was Stalin's attempt to gain absolute power. Although Stalin still utilized the services of several key figures such as Molotov or Beria in running the government, Stalin's leadership was still the sole authority in the Soviet state.

Certainly these measures did not fool everyone, but the fact that these policies were successful is evidenced by several memoirs from the time. Even brilliant people who later became dissidents were fooled by the propaganda. Soviet scientist Andrei Sakharov was still deluded at the time of Stalin's death.

I knew a lot about the horrible crimes. Of course, I knew far from everything and had not put it all together. Somewhere in my subconscious was a hypnotic idea

⁴² Borys Levytsky, trans by H. A. Piehler, *The Uses of Terror: The Soviet Secret Police 1917-1970* (New York, NY: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, INC., 1967), 87.

instilled by propaganda that suffering will exist during great historical events (when you chop wood, the chips will fly). In general, it turned out that I was more impressionable than I had wanted to think about myself... It was only when I was much older that I understood how much these discrepancies, fraud and deceptions departed from reality.⁴³

Machiavelli pointed out that it was easy to fool the simple-minded, but if someone as brilliant as Sakharov could be manipulated, then the propaganda must have been extraordinarily masterful. Sakharov was deceived for the short term, and because of this, contributed his brilliance to furthering the Soviet regime. Sakharov was the father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, a weapon that gave the Soviet Union parity with the United States during the arms race. This weapon system gave a large measure of power to the Soviet Union, and Stalin was able to use the hydrogen bomb as another example of his exceptional leadership. Stalin was able to strengthen his own personal power because Sakharov believed in appearances: the regime was legitimate and suffering had to occur during momentous historical epochs. In dealing with reason of state, as shown, it is the short term that is important. Lev Kopelev, neither a scientist nor in a position to be directly influenced by high government members, also admitted in his memoirs that he was misled by the propaganda. This is particularly surprising when one examines Kopelev's military position during World War II. He was in charge of initiating derisive propaganda within enemy lines, constantly lying to the enemy to entice them to surrender. He understood both the power of propaganda and the willingness of the Soviets to lie in their propaganda, yet he admits that he was still fooled about the Soviet regime at the time. Even after he had been arrested and had been convicted on false charges, he still devoutly believed that a mistake had been made that would soon be

⁴³ Andrei Sakharov, *Воспоминания* (New York: Chekhov Publishing Corporation, 1990), 217-218.

remedied by the Soviet authorities.⁴⁴ His arrest in April 1945 was well after the Moscow show trials of the late 1930's. His confidence that his innocence would save him showed the effect that the propaganda of the show trials had inflicted upon him. Kopelev truly believed that the government would punish only those who were guilty.⁴⁵

In addition to the confusion created by the propaganda and the confessions of those accused during the show trials, the Party introduced a new ideology: the concept that the current incidents were a necessary evil which was necessary to build a better future. Sakharov attested that he was thoroughly convinced that "suffering will exist during great historical events." Kopelev also testified to the strength of this assumption.

With the rest of my generation I firmly believed that the ends justified the means. Our great goal was the universal triumph of Communism, and for the sake of that goal everything was permissible—to lie, to steal, to destroy hundreds of thousands and even millions of people, all those who were hindering our work or could hinder it, everyone who stood in the way.⁴⁶

In preparing the trials, Stalin understood that the ultimate goal of each trial was to strengthen the legitimacy of the Party over all aspects of life. Stalin had two venues for achieving the goal of legitimacy: the use of subterfuge to establish the popular conclusion of the lawfulness of the trials and the creation of an environment of confusion to propagate the belief that the proceedings were necessary for the good of the future. The Party implemented all of these measures because of the recognition that the people must never realize the truth about the regime. The ruling elite must avoid the hatred of the people. Revolution would occur if the people ever discerned the truth, and through this

⁴⁴ Lev Kopelev. Trans. Anthony Austin, *To Be Preserved Forever* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company), 103.

⁴⁵ Kopelev 103.

⁴⁶ Kopelev 11.

revelation, arrived at a hatred for the regime. The Party used lies, exploitation, and fraud to manipulate the people and prevent them from hating and overthrowing the regime.

To this end, Stalin was more effective than Ivan at embodying Machiavelli's "lion and fox." The people never realized the full magnitude of the preparations that went into the show trials: the interrogations by the NKVD, the changing of laws to ensure the confessions of the accused, or any of the other behind-the-scenes work that characterizes the fox. The people saw only the strength of the lion, the strength of the regime in overcoming the treasonous actions of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their supporters. Ivan failed to take full advantage of the service of the crafty fox, relying instead solely upon the power of the lion. His attack against the Metropolitan was a direct assault, particularly in the public spotlight because of the special service that the Metropolitan was performing. Ivan took no steps to prepare the public for such an action. As a result, instead of viewing the tsar as a powerful lion in complete domination of his domain, the people perceived his actions as unrestrained power that simply destroys for lack of self-control. The people wondered why God was playing games with them, rather than thanking God for placing a strong sovereign on the throne to rule them. Ivan failed to comprehend that the role of the fox, when properly used, will make the lion appear even more powerful.

The Role of the Military

Machiavelli's Theory

Machiavelli identified military matters as the most important concern of a ruler. "The prime reason for losing power is neglect of military matters."⁴⁷ It is no longer possible in contemporary times to support Machiavelli's dictum that military matters are

⁴⁷ Machiavelli 531.

the most important issue in every situation, but they are certainly one of the essential elements that a ruler must consider. The issue of the military is the pivotal point in the paradigm shift in the modern age. Although the military can still be used to put down popular revolts, it is dangerous to use the military to police one's own population. This was evidenced by the refusal of military members to attack their fellow citizens during the February Revolution of 1917.

Machiavelli identified foreign and mercenary armies as worthless to a prince seeking to maintain his power. When the crisis has passed, a ruler is subservient to a foreign power; mercenaries will always want to be paid much more than their worth. In both cases, the cost of victory is too significant. The underlying premise to be learned is that neither type of army is totally loyal to the ruler, and therefore must be paid too high a price. If the army of the foreign power loses, then it is the local ruler who is defeated; but victory by the foreign power makes the local ruler a prisoner who must acquiesce to the demands of that foreign power.⁴⁸ A foreign ruler's army will then require some measure of power within the ruler's domain, removing the supreme power of the ruler himself. A mercenary army will demand a far greater price for their services than they are actually worth. If their price is not paid, then the mercenaries will go over to the enemy. The army must be totally loyal to the leader: "A wise ruler will seek to ensure that his citizens always, no matter what the circumstances, have an interest in preserving both him and his authority."⁴⁹ A prudent ruler will also ensure that the military has an interest in preserving him in power. He will provide special treatment to the military, with the

⁴⁸ Machiavelli 528-529.

⁴⁹ Machiavelli 522.

explicit understanding that if he were removed from power, the special treatment of the military would no longer exist.

Ivan's Actions

The army was the most important aspect during Ivan's time. The people did not have the social realization necessary to challenge the ruler en masse, but the army was necessary both to police the internal state and to defend against foreign invaders. But the boyars were in control of Ivan the Terrible's army. Although the tsar was commander of the army, the boyars filled all of the key military positions. Any order issued by the tsar was then carried out by the boyars. Any use of the army against the boyars would have required boyar support to carry out. In order to achieve absolute power, Ivan had to create an army that was totally loyal to him. He formed the *Oprichnina* in 1565, a region encompassing approximately half of the Tsardom and patrolled by his own guards, the *oprichniki*. The *Oprichnina* was designed to be self-sufficient, comprised of three regions: black earth lands where peasants paid taxes directly to the treasury, an agrarian region which supplied grain and other supplies, and lands suitable to provide to *oprichniki* as personal estates.⁵⁰

More important than an oath of absolute loyalty to the tsar, the gift of personal estates to the *oprichniki* bound them to the tsar. The *oprichniki* were chosen primarily from the lower gentry class, often children of boyars who had not received an inheritance of land and who were desperate for their own estates. They became loyal to the tsar because of the recognition that, without his support, they would return to being landless and impoverished. Their land and power had come as Ivan's wish of removing power from the upper boyars. Any loss of power by Ivan would mean a resulting loss by the

⁵⁰ Ruslan G. Skrynnikov, *Великий Государь Иоанн Васильевич Грозный*, Vol. 353.

oprichniki. By fashioning a system in which the *oprichniki* relied totally on him for their own support, Ivan created his own loyal army. This army would never demand any part of Ivan's power because they required his protection to maintain their own status. If Ivan were to remove his protection, the displaced boyars could have banded together and undoubtedly could have seized their former estates. The favored status of the *oprichniki* lasted only as long as Ivan protected them, and he would only provide protection in return for their complete loyalty. The *oprichniki* kidnapped, burned, and robbed at will. In one instance, during the night of 19 July 1568, members of the *oprichniki* rode through Moscow kidnapping wives of prominent officials and setting fire to houses of boyars and princes in disgrace.⁵¹ Ivan met the *oprichniki* during their foray and joined in the raids, providing official legitimacy for their actions.⁵² If the tsar ever withdrew his support, not only would these lucrative forays immediately cease, but the *oprichniki* would then have been at the mercy of the many enemies that they created every day. They were secure in the protection of the tsar as long as he never doubted their loyalty. When the *oprichniki* were finally disbanded in 1572, it was not because of any lack of loyalty to the tsar. Rather, the *oprichniki* were not effective as an army on the foreign battlefield.

Stalin's Actions

In addressing the situation with the Red Army, one of Stalin's early actions was to eliminate Trotsky, who had been a former commander of the Red Army. There were numerous reasons for the elimination of Trotsky, many of them based upon his ideological principles, but his role in leading the Red Army during the civil war was certainly a prime factor in his removal from power. Armies throughout history have

⁵¹ A. A. Zimin, *Опричнина* 181.

⁵² A. A. Zimin, *Опричнина* 181.

proven to be notoriously loyal to their commanders, rather than to the actual leaders of state. It is evident that Stalin recognized this tendency because of his later methods in purging Red Army officers. When high-ranking members of the officer corps were later arrested, it was done secretly, while they were in transit to Moscow, away from their commands.⁵³ If one of the senior commanders had been arrested at his place of command, the troops could very well have spontaneously revolted to protect a beloved commander. This method of secret arrests assured that a confession could later be shown to the lower ranks of the army, when it was already too late to save the commander. An army whose commanders are not totally loyal to the leader is the same as a mercenary army because one can never be sure of their support when the conflict occurs.

Facing an approaching war, Stalin deemed it vital that the Red Army be completely loyal to his authority. While it is questionable whether a purge of the leadership of an army is wise on the eve of war, Stalin appeared to believe that loyalty was more important than military proficiency. During the February Revolution, the army had overthrown the tsarist government when soldiers had revolted against the political leadership rather than follow orders to repress riots. A coup by the military leadership could easily topple the regime before a foreign army even had a chance to invade, let alone conquer the entire state.

More recent examples during the Civil War doubtless influenced Stalin's decision as well. In July 1920, Sepozhkov had mutinied against the Soviet Regime with a force of 2,700 soldiers.⁵⁴ It had taken the Soviets more than two years to completely subdue this

⁵³ J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999, 447.

⁵⁴ Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 53.

marauding force.⁵⁵ Later, in December 1920, Red Army officer Vakulin had revolted and another officer, Maslak, turned traitor in February 1921.⁵⁶ These revolts had involved several thousand armed soldiers and had taken considerable effort by the Red Army to suppress. If prevention of this coup also entailed an elimination of those best capable of defending against a foreign invasion, at least the regime had bought time to determine the strategy necessary to protect against the new threat. A successful coup would render useless all the military skill to the regime, for it would no longer be in power. Molotov's memoirs attest to the belief prevalent in the Party leadership that the military was genuinely preparing to stage a coup. Even years later, he believed that the military members who were executed were guilty and should not have been rehabilitated.⁵⁷

The purge of the Red Army began at the end of May 1937 with the arrest of eight senior commanders, including Marshal M. N. Tukhachevsky, General S. I. Kork, General I. E. Yakir, and General I. P. Uborevich, as well as four others.⁵⁸ Stalin charged them with "a military-political conspiracy against Soviet power" in a personal report in front of a panel of 116 senior Army commanders.⁵⁹ The initial wave against the army leadership proceeded rather quickly. Arrested in late May, the officers were convicted on 12 June, and executed on that same day, just over two weeks after their arrest.⁶⁰ While it is doubtful that they were conspiring with foreign powers, the convicted officers were clearly not the "party first, army second" officers that Stalin desired.⁶¹ Stalin appeared to think that because they placed the army, or the country, above the needs of the Party,

⁵⁵ Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, 53.

⁵⁶ Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, 53.

⁵⁷ Chuev, Feliks, *Сто сорок бесед с Молотовым* (Moscow: Terra, 1991), 390.

⁵⁸ Getty 444.

⁵⁹ Getty 444

⁶⁰ Getty 444-445.

⁶¹ Getty 445.

their loyalty could not be trusted during a time of impending crisis. Stalin's direct, personal report before the other senior Army officers was necessary to ensure that the entire officer corps realized the supremacy of the Party over all other aspects of life. The elimination of the rogue commanders was quick and efficient, and clearly affirmed the message of the pre-eminence of the Party.

Besides removing those leaders deemed to be disloyal, Stalin instituted proactive measures to establish the loyalty of the Red Army. The professional corps of the Red Army received preferential treatment. The government provided them with apartments at a time when apartments were difficult to obtain.⁶² Under Stalin, the Red Army procured steady supplies of food, and received larger rations than average during famines.⁶³ In addition to the extra food rations, the government paid the officer corps higher salaries than the average laborer received. In 1924, the government paid a corps commander 150 rubles, an amount approximately triple the salary of an average worker.⁶⁴ By the end of the 1930s, a corps commander was paid roughly 2,000 rubles a month, a salary which was seven times the salary of a common laborer.⁶⁵

Many of these benefits were not unique to the army, but were shared with high party officials as well. This level of benefits on an equal footing with that of high-ranking party officials demonstrated a recognition that the army was equally as important as the upper echelons of the government. In dealing with the Army, Stalin provided these benefits as a means of securing their loyalty. If the current leader fell from power, then these benefits might be removed. Additionally, food riots or other uprisings by the

⁶² Mervyn Matthew, *Privilege in the Soviet Union: A study of Elite Life-Styles under Communism* (London: 1978), 76.

⁶³ Matthew 68.

⁶⁴ Matthew 68.

⁶⁵ Matthew 100.

people can be subdued, but it is difficult to quell a riot by trained and well-armed members of the military. These benefits reduced potential reasons for the army to riot, thus removing one more risk to Stalin's power.

In dealing with armies, there is a fine line between rewarding an army for service and treating that army as a mercenary army. When an army is defending the homeland, Machiavelli argued that it was easy to inspire them and to keep their loyalty. However, it is much more difficult to inspire an army when invading a foreign nation, when they are no longer fighting to protect their own homes but to increase the power of the ruler. In this respect, they act more like a mercenary army than a homeland army. They must be convinced that the risk of their lives equals the benefits that they gain. If they are not convinced that the benefits outweigh the costs, then they will refuse to fight in the conflict. Once again, the ruler must convince the army that they have an interest in increasing his authority. The army must be convinced that, if the power of the leader increases, then their own personal stations will increase.

Because of this doctrine, Stalin was able to use the Red Army to subdue revolts in Soviet satellite countries. In these cases, the Red Army was fighting for Soviet, and thus Stalin's power, rather than in direct defense of their own homes. The Red Army crushed the revolts because the commanders knew that, without the satellite countries, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would decline; subsequently, their benefits that they received from the USSR would equally diminish. Their ideology of self-benefit that was met by a strong USSR with Stalin as its leader was greater than their desire for self-preservation. They were convinced that the perquisites were worth the potential risk of their lives in subduing the revolts in the satellite countries.

Removal of competition for power

Machiavelli's Theory

In addition to removing military competitors for power, a ruler must eradicate other competitors for his power. "But then, when you try to hold on to power, you will find the nobility, both those who have been your allies and those you have defeated, present you with an infinity of problems."⁶⁶ For one matter, the aristocracy, or in contemporary times the ruling elite, is quick to unite with each other or with foreigners to increase their own fortunes. If this unification is sufficiently strong, then the leader will have to share a measure of his personal power with this group. Because the goal of reason of state is to increase the ruler's personal power, this sharing of power with others is unacceptable. Any competition to power must be removed. However, in removing competitors for power, the ruler must acknowledge the position of the people. Removing a popular leader will arouse the hatred of the people. Once again, the ruler must utilize the measure of deception to ensure that the people do not realize that his attempt to increase his own power is at the expense of popular leaders whom the population might believe are worthy of defending.

Conspiracies exist whether the nobles are allying with foreigners or with each other against the ruler. Machiavelli addressed both forms of conspiracy with the same guidelines.

For a conspirator cannot act alone, and he can only find associates among those whom he believes are discontented. As soon as you tell someone who is discontented what you are planning, you give him the means to satisfy his ambitions, because it is obvious he can expect to be richly rewarded if he betrays you.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Machiavelli 509.

⁶⁷ Machiavelli 539.

As a result of this, there are several ways to prevent the conspirators from joining together. The first is to create an atmosphere of total fear. When the conspirators face nothing but “fear, mutual distrust, and the prospect of punishment, they lose heart.”⁶⁸ Along with fear, a ruler must instill an attitude of mistrust for others. A system of rewards for informants, as well as harsh penalties for withholding information, fosters an attitude of mistrust for others. When fear is combined with an attitude of mistrust in others, then conspirators never know whom they can trust and it is impossible for them to be united in treason.

Although Machiavelli discussed allies with regard to external power struggles, this discussion is also beneficial to the understanding of internal power struggles. Machiavelli debated that a ruler should ally with those who are weaker than oneself in order to destroy a common enemy.⁶⁹ An alliance with one who is stronger follows the lines of the same argument against an alliance with foreign armies: it places the ruler into their debt. The stronger ally will demand either repayment or some measure of the ruler’s power. However, in allying with one who is weaker, the ruler will gain power over the ally, as well as destroy a rival that might have been unassailable if attacked unaided. These methods work regardless of whether the ruler is trying to increase power abroad or increase power internally.

In removing rivals to power, both Ivan and Stalin were effective in following Machiavelli’s judgment regarding the complete destruction of enemies. “There is a general rule to be noted here: People should either be caressed or crushed. If you do them minor damage they will get their revenge; but if you cripple them there is nothing

⁶⁸ Machiavelli 539.

⁶⁹ Machiavelli 548.

they can do.”⁷⁰ Both leaders mercilessly crushed their opposition and were not troubled by enemies seeking revenge. Their enemies were incapable of seeking revenge after they had been dealt with.

Ivan's Actions

Ivan viewed the boyars as a serious threat to his power. This belief arose from the mistreatment of the tsar during his childhood by some of the boyars. In a later letter to Prince Kurbsky, Ivan wrote about one boyar that had aroused the tsar's enmity.

I will recall one thing. While we were playing childish games in our infancy, Prince Ivan Vasilievich Shuisky sat on a bench, leaning with his elbows on our father's bed and with his leg upon a chair, and he did not even incline his head towards us, either in parental manner or even as to a master, nor was there any element of deference to be found in his attitude towards us. And who can endure such arrogance?⁷¹

Modern historians argue that Ivan's father and grandfather had destroyed the real power of the boyars. When Ivan ascended the throne, the boyars were no longer a true threat to his power. Whether or not they were actually still a threat is irrelevant. It was the perception, borne from their treatment of him during his impressionable childhood years, that they were a serious threat to his power that dictated the actions that he took to neutralize the threat.

Although the banishment of boyars from the capital to the borderlands helped to alleviate the problem of conspiracies, it did not stamp them out altogether: several conspiracies were formed among those boyars remaining in the capital. In 1568, King Sigismund Augustus of Lithuania was convinced by a Moscow native named Kozlov

⁷⁰ Machiavelli 505.

⁷¹ J. L. I. Fennel, *The Correspondence between Prince A. M. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV of Russia*, (Cambridge: 1955), 75. There is some doubt as to whether these letters are genuine or a forgery.

that leading boyars in Moscow wanted to defect to Lithuania.⁷² Kozlov was sent back with documents addressed to some of these members, Princes Borotinsky, Bel'sky, and Mstislavsky, as well as others in which they were invited to ally with the king's forces.⁷³ Although it is doubtful that Kozlov was accurate in his declaration that all of the leading boyars in Moscow were ready to defect, the documents that were seized by the tsar appear to be genuine. King Sigismund Augustus was convinced that at least some of the boyars wanted to join his forces.

Moving boyars to the borderlands effectively eliminated them from conspiring together. The drawback of moving the boyars to the borderlands was that it enabled the boyars to flee if they were given any indication that they would succumb to Ivan's rampages. In 1568, three princes from Rostov were executed for planning to flee to Lithuania, not in order to ally with King Augustus against the tsar, but to avoid the tsar's unpredictable terror.⁷⁴

In the use of terror as a reinforcement, the behavior that a ruler wishes to increase is fidelity. Modern psychological studies have shown that intermittent, or random, reinforcement is the most effective. The subject will work equally hard for those trials for which he is rewarded as those for which he is not, because he has no idea when it will be rewarded.⁷⁵ The obverse is also true: a subject will work equally hard in every case not to be punished when he has no idea in which case punishment will occur. Ivan's random terror instituted against the boyars was all the more effective because of its random nature. The boyars were never aware of either the timing of Ivan's attack or the

⁷² Ruslan G. Skrynnikov, *Великий Государь Иоан Васильевич Грозный*, Vol. 2, 11.

⁷³ Ruslan G. Skrynnikov, *Великий Государь Иоан Васильевич Грозный*, Vol. 2, 13.

⁷⁴ A. A. Zimin, *Опричнина* 185.

⁷⁵ Captain Neal-Walden, Behavioral Science 210, USAFA, class notes by author, Lesson 27.

length of his tirades. Because of this intermittent reinforcement, random terror was effective in controlling the conspiracies of the boyars. As evidenced by the Lithuanian attempts to coerce Moscow boyars, this terror took time to become established, but the real conspiracies against Ivan did cease. The drawback from Ivan's random terror was that, although it did prevent conspiracies, it failed to prevent the flight of boyars fearful for their own lives.

Before Ivan truly had absolute power, he corroborated with the church, while at the same time strengthening his power base with the people, in order to attack the boyars. He had to bring three groups under his control: the church, the boyars, and the people. It would be difficult to attack any one group unaided, but an alliance with any one group might achieve possible victory; aid of any two factions against the third would assure his position. Once victory had been secured, then the alliance could be broken and one of the other groups could be subdued as well. On 3 December 1564, Ivan left Moscow and departed for Kolomenskoe.⁷⁶ A month later, he sent a letter to the boyars remaining in Moscow declaring his disgust with them for their corrupt administration of government.⁷⁷ At the same time, he dispatched another announcement to the prominent merchants of Moscow that he would be forced to abdicate the throne because of the boyars; he assured the Moscow merchants that his abdication was directed at the boyars and not at them.⁷⁸ Previous to this, he had submitted to Metropolitan Philip in order to gain the support of the church. Both the people and the boyars implored Ivan to return, but it was too late for the boyars to repent. The stage had been set, the people and the church had rallied behind

⁷⁶ S. B. Veselovskii, *Исследования по истории опричнины* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1963) 134.

⁷⁷ S. B. Veselovskii 135.

⁷⁸ S. B. Veselovskii 135.

the tsar, and he utilized this support to organize the *Oprichnina* and to deport many of the boyars to the outer provinces.

Once the *Oprichnina* was established and the boyars were subjugated, then Ivan was free to distance himself from the church and the people and begin his attack against both groups. Through the manner of allying against one group, Ivan was able to secure power and then attack the remaining groups at once. His attack on the Church culminated in 1569 with his deposing of Metropolitan Philip and Philip's subsequent murder. His assault on Novgorod in 1570 demonstrated his power to attack at one time his three perceived rivals for power: boyars, the Church, and the people.

Stalin's Actions

The assassination of Kirov on 1 December 1934, in all likelihood staged by the NKVD, was used with great effectiveness to remove many enemies. It would be difficult to prove beyond doubt that Stalin ordered the assassination of Kirov, but there are many suspicious circumstances that point toward NKVD involvement. The day after the murder, 2 December, Kirov's bodyguard was the only person killed in a motor accident. He was traveling to testify as to the identity of the man who gave him orders to leave Kirov's side for a period of time the night before.⁷⁹ It was during this period away from his post that Nikolaev was able to assassinate Kirov. Prior to this, Kirov's bodyguard had not indicated who had issued the order, nor did he leave behind any indication. To this day, the identity of the conspirator is unknown. However, it can be surmised that the conspirator was well known by the bodyguard and was of a sufficient position to be able to order the bodyguard to leave his post.

⁷⁹ Borys Levytsky, *Stalinist Terror in the Thirties: Documentation from the Soviet Press* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1974), 38-40.

Also closely associated with the assassination were directions issued by the Central Executive Committee on 1 December, the day of Kirov's assassination. On that day, Secretary of the Central Executive Committee Yenukidze, acting under Stalin's authority, issued instructions ordering investigating authorities to expedite the cases of persons accused of terrorist actions. In addition, the judicial authority was not to postpone discharging a death sentence for terrorist actions, and the NKVD was to administer the sentence immediately after the pronouncement of judgment.⁸⁰ The official reason was to demonstrate that terrorism would not be tolerated by the regime. The actual reason was much more cunning. By immediately executing terrorists, the authorities could charge other groups with aiding the terrorists. Without anyone alive from the group to refute the charges, the NKVD could fabricate false evidence linking new "conspirators" with the original terrorists. Acting upon these instructions, the NKVD held an immediate trial for Nikolaev and a small group who were arrested as co-conspirators. Upon the issuance of a predetermined guilty sentence, the NKVD shot the whole group on 30 December.⁸¹

Regardless of whether Stalin personally orchestrated the initial assassination, he used the assassination to his own benefit in later years. His immediate execution of Nikolaev, the man who actually shot Kirov, prepared a bulwark that helped to guide *fortuna* for later use. Zinoviev and Kamenev, who could not be attacked directly because of their popularity with the public, were originally blamed with moral responsibility for supporting an atmosphere that led to the assassination of Kirov, and in a later trial, blamed with responsibility for planning the actual assassination itself. Besides these two

⁸⁰ Levytsky, *Stalinist Terror in the Thirties: Documentation from the Soviet Press*, 81-82.

⁸¹ Levytsky, *Stalinist Terror in the Thirties: Documentation from the Soviet Press*, 83.

prominent leaders, the NKVD, under Stalin's authority, used the opportunity to implicate many groups on its black list and arrest and dispose of these groups.⁸² A report prepared for the Politburo Commission confirmed that Soviet Prosecutor Vyshinsky "played a provocative role in the judicial inquiries. When the evidence was analyzed, he demanded sharper political conclusions and generalizations and, essentially, the falsification of cases."⁸³ Additionally, Vyshinsky ordered that "cases in which there is insufficient documentary evidence for them to be examined in a court of law are to be transferred for examination by the Special Board of the NKVD of the USSR."⁸⁴ The NKVD arrested several different groups and brought them either to the courts or to the Special Board of the NKVD. These trials, along with the associated fabricated "evidence," produced confusion over which group was actually responsible for the assassination and kept misdirecting the attention of the public from what was actually transpiring: the elimination of groups that had been troublesome to the regime. When Stalin finally determined to clear the confusion and focus the spotlight of public attention on Zinoviev and Kamenev as bearing responsibility for the assassination, the NKVD could deal with the other groups. The disappearance of these groups did not register in the spectrum of public opinion for long because of the huge confusion created by the multiple arrests.⁸⁵ Once a group was forgotten, it was quietly eliminated.⁸⁶

Perhaps the best example of the lion and the fox was the scheme used in the arrest and trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev. The proficient manner with which Stalin dealt with

⁸² John J. Dziak, *Chekisty* (Lexington, VA: Lexington Books, 1988), 62.

⁸³ Arkady Vaksberg, trans. By Jan Butler, *Stalin's Prosecutor: The life of Andrei Vyshinsky* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), 79.

⁸⁴ Vaksberg, *Stalin's Prosecutor: The life of Andrei Vyshinsky*, 87.

⁸⁵ Borys Levytsky, *Stalinist Terror in the Thirties: Documentation from the Soviet Press* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1974), 82-83.

⁸⁶ Borys Levytsky, *Stalinist Terror in the Thirties: Documentation from the Soviet Press*, 83.

these two completely removed them from the power they held while, at the same time, it strengthened the legitimacy of the regime. Because of the popularity of these two officials, the public would not have believed a secret trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev. Such a trial would only have damaged the legitimacy of the regime. A public trial was necessary, but, if done too early, the manufactured evidence would never have passed public scrutiny. Instead, Stalin chipped away at their character base, and thus their popularity with the people, by charges of immoral activity. Although not confessing to actual participation in the murder, both Zinoviev and Kamenev admitted to bearing a moral responsibility for the degeneration of the criminals. Kamenev confessed to “not being sufficiently active and energetic in combating the disintegration which was a result of the struggle against the Party and on the basis of which such a band of criminals [Nikolayev and his accomplices] could be formed and accomplish their misdeeds.”⁸⁷ Later, another trial was held during which both publicly confessed to planning and to participating in the actual murder itself. The two were eventually shot. Conveniently, no witnesses were left alive from Nikolayev’s original circle of conspirators. They had all been shot shortly after capture, and before there was even time to interrogate them properly.⁸⁸

Eventually, the slander against Kamenev and Zinoviev was increased to the point that, in the 1959 edition of the History of the Communist Party, both were accused not only of the assassination of Kirov, but also of the following charges: they “participated in shooting Lenin in 1918, aggravation of differences in the Party in 1921 with the object of undermining and overthrowing Lenin’s leadership from within, and the murders of

⁸⁷ Borys Levytsky, trans by H. A. Piehler, *The Uses of Terror: The Soviet Secret Police 1917-1970* (New York, NY: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, INC., 1967), 87.

⁸⁸ Levytsky, *Stalinist Terror in the Thirties: Documentation from the Soviet Press*, 83.

Menzhinsky, Kuibyshev, and Gorky.”⁸⁹ The accusations of undermining Lenin’s leadership in the Party in 1921 can easily be proven to be false. In a letter written shortly before Lenin’s death, Krupskaya had specifically called Zinoviev and Kamenev two of Vladimir Ilych’s closest comrades.⁹⁰ Although Khrushchev would later correct Communist Party history to remove the false accusations against Zinoviev and Kamenev and report that Kirov’s death was still under investigation, the Party line as espoused in the 1959 history was believed for a lengthy period of time. The public actually believed the accusations against them, and no outcry was raised when such ludicrous charges were placed against them in the recordings of official Party history, even after the death of Stalin.

Stalin was masterful at seizing the raging torrent of *fortuna* and guiding it to his own advantage. It would be difficult to prove that Stalin directly ordered many of the atrocities that characterized the early development of the Soviet regime, such as the famine in Ukraine. There are few “smoking guns,” orders signed directly by Stalin, that prove his culpability in any of the brutal affairs that constantly occurred during Soviet times. However, there is no doubt that, once Stalin was aware of these events, he took advantage of the opportunities with which *fortuna* had provided him. In *The Harvest of Sorrow*, Robert Conquest concludes that Stalin, as well as the rest of the Party leadership, knew about the famine in the Ukraine. Molotov had traveled to the Ukrainian countryside in 1932, and Khrushchev later admitted to knowing that people were dying in “enormous numbers.”⁹¹ Terekhov, First Secretary of the Kharkov Provincial Committee,

⁸⁹ Ed. By A Commission of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. (B), *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union / Bolsheviks* (Moscow, Russia: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1950), 427.

⁹⁰ Arkady Vaksberg *Stalin's Prosecutor: The Life of Andrei Vyshinsky* 73.

⁹¹ Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, 324.

had informed Stalin about the vast extent of the famine and had requested that grain be sent.⁹² Conquest does not deduce that Stalin specifically ordered the famine, but he does lay responsibility on Stalin for not alleviating the suffering once Stalin discovered the extent of the famine.⁹³ The fact that the leadership knew of the extent of the famine and did nothing to assuage the situation was hidden from the public. The famine served the purpose of the leadership: it removed the will to resist from a potentially dangerous portion of society, Ukrainian peasants. Great care was taken to ensure that the public would never realize the actual role that Stalin played, before and after the issue entered the public spotlight.

Before his attack on Kamenev and Zinoviev, Stalin had also utilized Machiavelli's instruction regarding the use of allies to eliminate rivals. First allying with Kamenev and Zinoviev, this *troika* had eliminated Stalin's principal rival, Trotsky. Stalin then proceeded to turn on his former allies by allying with Bukharin. Stalin finally turned against Bukharin; with his elimination, Stalin was the sole possessor of power. On 2 March 1938, the last Moscow show trial began with Bukharin, Yagoda, and fourteen other defendants. While the first show trial of Kamenev and Zinoviev had been organized around the assassination of Kirov, the second had shifted focus and concentrated upon industrial sabotage. This last show trial combined the two previous centers of focus in contending that the defendants had participated in industrial sabotage, espionage; it was further alleged that the defendants had already divided up the country, promising various regions to Germany, Japan, and Poland.⁹⁴ Yagoda, the former director of the NKVD, was also accused of using his position as the leader of the Soviet secret

⁹² Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, 325.

⁹³ Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, 324-325.

⁹⁴ Getty 525.

police to cover up the activities of the conspirators.⁹⁵ Bukharin, although confessing to the overall charges, argued with Vyshinsky over specific particulars during the trial itself.⁹⁶ Whether this was done because he was attempting to prevent retaliation against his family or whether he truly believed that he could be convicted but still spared is unknown. The decision had already been made, no rivals to Stalin's power were to remain alive. At the conclusion of the trial and the predetermined guilty verdict, all of the defendants were shot.

A combination of force by these allies against Stalin would doubtless have removed him from power; possibly Trotsky could have removed an unaided Stalin. But attacking each group individually, with the aid of allies, assured the success of the venture. In the end, Stalin had eliminated all rivals and had become the sole possessor of power.

In his quest to eliminate rivals, Stalin also made effective use of Machiavelli's dictum to assign blame for reprehensible actions to others, when possible. "Dizzy with success" was one example in which Stalin blamed excesses in the collectivization campaign on local administrators, rather than on the central government that had orchestrated the original drive. In this article published on 2 March 1930 in *Pravda*, Stalin emphasized that the entire collective farm movement was voluntary. To establish the collectives by force would be "foolish and reactionary."⁹⁷ Stalin then proceeded to illustrate how administrators in Turkestan had attempted to accelerate the process by threatening the peasants with scarcity of necessary goods if they refused to join the

⁹⁵ Getty 525.

⁹⁶ Getty 526.

⁹⁷ "Головокружение от успехов" in *Правда*, 2 Mar. 1930.

collective farms.⁹⁸ He publicly condemned these actions and blamed the local administration for the excessive nature of the collectivization program.

The overturn of NKVD leaders is another example of passing blame. When the extremes associated with the arrests and executions finally reached the critical point where the subject had to be addressed, Stalin replaced the head of the NKVD and blamed the former director of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs for any of the "excessive" measures that had been used. This occurred twice, first with Yagoda replaced by Yezhov on 26 September 1936, and with his later replacement by Beria on 12 December 1938.⁹⁹ Each replacement was subsequently followed by new purges of the ranks.

In a telegram sent to Moscow on 25 September 1936, Stalin and Zhdanov revealed their misgivings about Yagoda:

We consider it absolutely necessary and urgent to appoint Comrade Yezhov to be People's Commissar of Internal Affairs. Yagoda has definitely shown himself incapable of exposing the band of Trotskyists and Zinoviev people. The NKVD is four years behindhand in this respect.¹⁰⁰

Thus, the leadership of the NKVD was changed to put a fresh, capable leader in charge, one who was eager to prove himself through new purges. When Yezhov was installed as Director of the NKVD, he proceeded to purge the upper ranks of the NKVD.¹⁰¹ Blame was then successfully put upon these members for many of the excessive measures that had occurred. A letter addressed to Stalin from children whose parents had been murdered by the NKVD gives an account of how effective the placing

⁹⁸ Правда, 2 Mar. 1930.

⁹⁹ Robert Conquest, *Inside Stalin's Secret Police: NKVD Politics 1936-1939* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), 195.

¹⁰⁰ Borys Levytsky, *The Uses of Terror: The Soviet Secret Police 1917-1970*, 89.

¹⁰¹ Simon Wolin, *The Soviet Secret Police* (New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), 17.

of blame was: "Our parents were honorable Communists...the enemies of the people, the accursed Trotskyist, must have done this." The children were referring to the NKVD members responsible for the murder of their parents. These members had already been shot.¹⁰² There is no doubt that Stalin approved of Yezhov's methods. Yezhov was awarded the Order of Lenin for his role in the purges. The citation specifically mentions Yezhov's "outstanding success" in leading the NKVD in governmental assignments.¹⁰³ Yezhov was initially awarded for his success, but later blamed for this same accomplishment. The public believed this transfer of blame, and Stalin succeeded in large scale purges without actually being accused of them.

In December 1938, Beria replaced Yezhov, and once again the newly installed head of the NKVD proceeded to purge the upper ranks of the NKVD and blame them for the excessive measures that had occurred during the *Yezhovshina*. Khrushchev and other Party members from various parts of the Ukraine witnessed a trial in which some of Yezhov's men were either shot or given long prison terms for torturing innocent communists, extorting false confessions, and carrying out illegal executions.¹⁰⁴ Once again, blame was successfully transferred from the regime to those individuals who were simply following orders.

In all of these examples, Stalin was effective at taking the opportunities provided by *fortuna* and utilizing them to seize even further power. Not only was he able to eliminate rivals, but he was also able to strengthen his popular support, the most important aspect of a modern ruler's power base. Stalin's innate ability to manipulate the opportunities that *fortuna* presented was his greatest strength. Without this capitalization

¹⁰² Borys Levytsky, *The Uses of Terror: The Soviet Secret Police 1917-1970*, 94.

¹⁰³ Getty 451

¹⁰⁴ Borys Levytsky, *The Uses of Terror: The Soviet Secret Police 1917-1970*, 94.

upon *fortuna*, it is doubtful that Stalin would have been able to eliminate rivals, strengthen his popular support, and gain total power.

Historical Interpretation

When considering the actions previously examined, particularly those of Ivan Groznyi, it is important to realize that there are differing historical interpretations. Historian A. A. Zimin presents one of the prevalent positions in his book *Oprichnina*. This paper follows many of the lines of his argument: the *Oprichnina* was a creation of the tsar to completely subordinate the boyars and the Orthodox Church to the power of the head of state. Once the *Oprichnina* had accomplished these goals, the Tsar quickly eliminated the institute.

Ivan Groznyi wanted to accomplish the task of completing the centralization of the state apparatus by old methods, returning to the forms of estate control by the tsar. After liquidating Prince Vladimir Staritski's lot, putting an end to the remainders of Novgorod liberties and attaining the complete subordination of the church to the state, Ivan Groznyi's *Oprichnina* had accomplished its main tasks. Its further existence lost any historical meaning. In the course of the Novgorod pogrom, dangerous phenomena were particularly revealed. Moreover the army of *oprichniki*, even more than before, had degenerated into unbridled guards like the Janissary, that lived by robbing and murdering the peaceful population.¹⁰⁵

Zimin carries his interpretation a step further, arguing from a Marxist viewpoint that the *Oprichnina* was still another feudalist manner of repressing the common people.¹⁰⁶ The *Oprichnina* system was merely a power struggle within the ruling class and not an intra-class struggle. Ivan was not a kind-hearted tsar who wished to remove the yoke of oppression that the boyar class had on the common people; he merely wanted absolute power for himself and wanted to subdue all opposition to his will.

¹⁰⁵ A. A. Zimin, *Опричнина*, 260.

¹⁰⁶ A. A. Zimin, *Опричнина*, 238.

Historian Stepan Veselovskii takes an opposing view from Zimin's argument.

Veselovskii contends that the *Oprichnina* was not established to battle the boyar class. In fact, the entire management of the *Oprichnina* was quite haphazard. Far from attacking the boyar class, the tsar personally felt responsible for every tragedy that occurred under the *Oprichnina* system.

Any careless disgraces, injustice and cruelty fell not on any establishment and not to the executors of tsarist orders, but personally to the tsar. There is no doubt whatever that Ivan understood this and, without wavering, accepted complete responsibility. He recognized that he, as all people, was not sinless and could make mistakes. Ivan voiced his persuasion that God would fault him for these errors, and was confident that He took them from his soul.¹⁰⁷

Veselovskii's argument is particularly remarkable when one considers that it was written under Stalin's period, yet completely fails to espouse the traditional Marxist viewpoint of Ivan *Groznyi*. Veselovskii's deep-seated ideology of presenting the truth as he perceived it obviously outweighed the Party-crafted ideology that Soviet historians must follow Marxist doctrine and even concern for his own career or for his own personal safety.

Unlike the opening of Soviet archives where authentic, new information is uncovered that can revise previous arguments on the Soviet era, it is doubtful that any fresh evidence will ever be uncovered that settles the debate of the *Oprichnina*. All historians choose how much weight they will give to each fact, each piece of evidence, and thus create their own versions of historical events. Moreover, although historians claim to be unbiased, they are often influenced by their own values, their own *weltanschauung*, or even by politics. However, even though Zimin's Marxist conclusions regarding the strengthening of feudalism in Russia cannot be supported, the

¹⁰⁷ S B. Veselovskii 320.

argument that Ivan was attacking the boyars in order to achieve absolute power appears to be a particularly valid stance.

Conclusion: Science of Power must be Limited by Moral Restraints

Particularly when regarding Ivan the Terrible, it is the perceived reality, and not necessarily the reality itself, that should be considered in examining his actions. Thus, while the citizens of Novgorod were probably not conspiring with the Lithuanian king, it was Ivan's perception, born from his paranoia of persecution, that Novgorod was conspiring that should be examined. In the light of Ivan's perception, his actions are consistent with a desire to achieve absolute power. Ivan's actions against the boyars also appear more rational when viewed from a persecution complex. In examining Ivan's actions in practicing reason of state, in consolidating his own power, it is important to examine his reason for implementing measures to combat a perceived threat. The measures were perhaps even more successful because their heavy-handed implementation, designed to overwhelm the opposition, encountered little discouragement to dull the blade. Most of the pillaging, burning, and murders were designed to prove one thing, the tsar had absolute power to do as he wished. It was this desire to demonstrate absolute power that gave rise to extremes in inflicting terror upon the boyars and upon the people. If Ivan's desire had merely been to attain absolute power, then many of the atrocities could have been curtailed. The *oprichniki* could have been held within certain boundaries. However, Ivan's desire was not only to attain absolute power, but to prove that he had absolute power to gratify his every whim.

There are several periods throughout Ivan's reign during which he repented and asked for forgiveness both from God and from the people. But it is difficult to reconcile

those times of repentance before the *Oprichnina* with later atrocities that he committed during his reign of terror. One plausible explanation is that he truly believed that he was God's chosen authority over all Russian people, lands, and government, and even the Church itself. Any attack on him was the same as an attack on God Himself and should be harshly quashed. However, this fails to account for the complete lack of moderation that Ivan showed in exercising his power. The innocent were punished as well as the guilty, and often the innocent alone were punished. The tsar probably manufactured the evidence linking Novgorod to a Lithuanian plot as an excuse to attack the city. In determining Ivan's actions regarding reason of state, it was his perception that was vital to consider. His perception was that Novgorod had to be crushed. But when regarding his culpability for lack of moral restraint, it is reality itself that must be examined. Because nobody in Novgorod was guilty of treason against the tsar, Ivan was not in fact defending an attack on himself and God, but simply demonstrating his unlimited power. Toward the end of his life, Ivan once again repented of his crimes, apparently humbling himself before God.

Shortly before World War II, Stalin commissioned a film by Sergei Eisenstein to depict the life of Ivan the Terrible. A newspaper article was later published with Stalin's reaction and Eisenstein's comments after they had watched it together. The film showed Ivan's destruction of Novgorod, as well as other carnage. Stalin commented on the Oprichniki and compared them to the American Klu Klux Klan, remarking that the only difference between the two was that the *oprichniki* wore black instead of white.¹⁰⁸ Considering that this was during the late 1930s during the peak days of the KKK, this

¹⁰⁸ "Сталин, Молотов и Жданов о 2-й серии фильма «Иван Грозный»" in Московские Новости Number 32, 7 August 1988, p. 8.

comparison was remarkable. The KKK was well known in its role of organizing lynchings and murders and other reprehensible deeds of terror. This comparison demonstrated that Stalin approved of the use of random terror directed at innocent people in order to achieve the desired goal. At the end of the film, Stalin concluded that Ivan's problem was that he had not killed enough people during his terror.¹⁰⁹ Throughout the newspaper articles, and particularly in his critique that Ivan did not kill enough people, Stalin clearly showed his distaste for any moderation of terror. Although Ivan may have later genuinely repented for his actions during his time of terror, Stalin repeatedly demonstrated his aversion to any restraint.

The fundamental aspect of Machiavelli's dictums is that the methods that he advocates that are not beneficial to the people are only methods that should be used during extreme circumstances. When there is no other recourse of action, then a ruler must resort to lying to the people to instill fear within them; otherwise, a ruler should seek the good of his population as much as possible. In dealing with an extreme circumstance, Machiavelli admitted that the ends may *excuse* the means, but this was to be determined by the people themselves. The people will never justify the evil deed, but they may excuse it in light of the end results. It is the final judgment of the population that matters, not their judgment during the time of the events. As the evidence has shown, people can be deceived and can rationalize actions that they later find reprehensible when they have had time to fully examine the situation. Stalin was able to carry out colossal atrocities because the people at the time excused his means. This was a result of an understanding of the natural laws that govern politics as well as possession of great skill in the art aspect of politics. Careful planning confused the people; when

¹⁰⁹ Московские Новости 7 August 1988.

policies were shaped around the ideology of building communism, the people excused the means used at the time. Stalin was excused because of the prevailing ideology that the methods were necessary for the greater good of building communism.

In both cases, the judgment of the people ultimately condemned the actions perpetrated by the leaders. In Ivan's case, a partial judgment was immediate; the people were respectful of his strong hand in crushing enemies, but condemned his lack of restraint which killed many innocent victims as well. In the case of Stalin, time had to pass for people to fully comprehend the magnitude of his crimes. When people finally discerned the truth from the confusion, they condemned Stalin's actions.

There exists a science that governs power. Machiavelli's reason of state provides a model for attaining this power. Ivan and Stalin successfully demonstrated different aspects of Machiavelli's principles of this science. These principles have not remained static over time. Instead, the importance of the military has diminished while the advent of social mobilization and the related rise of social organization has brought the people to the forefront of importance. With this shift, the ability to master *fortuna* also appears to take a more important role than Machiavelli originally assigned. The ingenious use of those opportunities provided by *fortuna* can strengthen the power of the ruler. Situations can be used to directly eliminate rivals while at the same time increasing the legitimacy of the regime. Stalin understood this shift of importance in the theory of reason of state from the minor role that the population played within the periods of Machiavelli and Ivan to the vital role that it occupies in the modern age. As a result, he took particular care to exploit every opportunity afforded by *fortuna* to strengthen his power over the people.

The advent of social mobilization forced an adjustment in the tenets of reason of state, an adjustment that was not necessary for Ivan but that Stalin demonstrated proficiently.

This science of power can be exercised with or without moral restraints, although moral restraints are necessary to ensure the good of the people. This examination of history proved that power can be achieved without moral restraint, but this will devastate the people. Ivan and Stalin repeatedly failed to restrain their actions, forcing the Russian populace to suffer many atrocities during two separate times of terror.

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